

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NEAE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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OPR-02 A-01 OC-06 SY-05 SCCT-01 DHA-02 DPW-01 SSM-03

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INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

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FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D O N T I A L BEIRUT 6316

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

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SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 16: HOPED-FOR SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN

RAPPROCHEMENT FADING; MILITARY LULL IN MOST SECTORS

REF: BEIRUT 6255

1. SUMMARY: ARAFAT REFUSES GO TO DAMASCUS UNTIL SYRIANS ABIDE BY WITHDRAWAL PROMISES, BUT LOWER-LEVEL PALESTINIAN DELEGATION SUPPOSED TO GO TODAY. CHRISTIANS CONFIDENT OF UNDERSTANDINGS WITH SYRIANS. CHRISTIANS AT TRIPOLI AS SYRIANS CONTINUE ADVANCE FROM NORTH. PALESTINIANS HAVE ABANDONED BAALBEK. OTHER FRONTS, TO INCLUDE TELL ZAATAR, RELATIVELY QUIET. SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM SIDON AREA STOPPED AT JEZZINE. PALESTINIANS DELAYED IN EFFORT BUILD AIRFIELD IN SOUTH NEAR NABATIEH. SHIPPING BEGINS THROUGH SIDON PORT. US EMBASSY LOGISTIC SITUATION INCREASINGLY TIGHT. EMBASSY HAS MADE MAJOR APPEAL TO AMCITS TO JOIN DEPARTURE NEXT WEEK, AFTER WHICH EMBASSY WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO RENDER ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. HOPES FOR PALESTINIAN-SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT SHAKEN AS ARAFAT VISIT TO DAMASCUS POSTPONED. PALESTINIANS SAY ARAFAT WILL NOT GO UNTIL SYRIAN FORCES WITHDRAW FROM SOFAR TO THE BEKAA AND AGENDA FOR MEETING IS AGREED UPON. RADIO LIBAN (LEBANESE ARAB ARMY) ADDS THAT SYRIANS MUST ALSO WITHDRAW FROM BAALBEK AND FROM TRIPOLI AREA BEFORE DIALOGUE POSSIBLE.

3. LIBYAN PREMIER JALLOUD IS AGAIN IN BEIRUT TALKING TO LEFTIST AND PALESTINIAN L
HYTYOV KAMAL JUNBLATT
ANNOUNCED CREATION OF UNITED PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST "CENTRAL POLITICAL COUNCIL." ON RIGHT FOUR DELEGATES RETURNING FROM DAMASCUS SAY THAT SYRIANS WILL COMPOSE HALF OF ARAB LEAGUE FORCE. RIGHTISTS SAY EXPECT SOME DETENTE TO DEVELOP SOON. RIGHTISTS EXPECT ROAD BETWEEN MT. LEBANON AND DAMASCUS VIA MROUJE, ZAHLE AND BEKAA VALLEY WILL BE OPEN IN ABOUT TEN DAYS.

4. MILITARY ACTION COUNTRYWIDE IS AT REDUCED LEVEL. MOST ACTIVE AREA IS AROUND TRIPOLI, WHERE CHRISTIAN FORCES ARE AT SOUTHERN OUTSKIRTS. SYRIANS HAVE
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COMPLETELY SURROUNDED PALESTINIAN CAMP AT NAHR AL-BARID AND CAPTURED CROSSROADS TO NORTH OF CAMP AT EL-BDI, AFTER HEAVY GROUND FIGHTING WITH BOTH TANKS AND INFANTRY, INFLECTING HEAVY CASUALTIES ON PALESTINIAN DEFENDERS. PALESTINIAN GROUPS STILL OCCUPY HIGH GROUND BETWEEN TRIPOLI AND ZGHORTA.

5. FIGHTING CONTINUES AT TELL ZAATAR, ALTHOUGH

CHRISTIAN FORCES FOR FIRST TIME IN THREE WEEKS DID NOT ANNOUNCE OFFENSIVE OPERATION AGAINST CAMP. PALESTINIANS CLAIM OFFENSIVE AGAINST TALLET EL-MIR, HILL OVERLOOKING CAMP. CHRISTIANS SAY THEY ARE HOLDING 150 PRISONERS AND HAVE SENT ABOUT 850 OTHERS (NON-COMBATANTS, POSSIBLY SOME COMBATTANTS) TO THE BEKAA OR TO WEST BEIRUT. ICRC HAS ABANDONED, FOR NOW, EFFORTS TO ARRANGE SAFE-PASSAGE FOR WOUNDED PALESTINIANS FROM CAMP TO WEST BEIRUT. USUAL ARTILLERY EXCHANGES AND SNIPER FIRE ALONG CITY'S TRADITIONAL FRONTS AND AROUND SHIITE ENCLAVE OF NABAA.

6. ELSEWHERE, THE AKKAR, TO INCLUDE HERMEL, IS QUIET. IN THE BEKAA, PALESTINIANS HAVE ABANDONED BAALBEK TO SYRIANS. ROMAN RUINS ARE UNDAMAGED. SOME ARAB LIBERATION FRONT (PRO-IRAQI) ELEMENTS STILL ACTIVE IN AREA NORTH OF ZAHLE. SYRIANS ARE STILL AT SOFAR, AND, IN SOUTH, HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM SIDON AREA ONLY AS FAR AS ROM-JEZZINE AREA. RELIABLE SOURCE FROM SOUTH LEBANON REPORTS THAT CONSTRUCTION OF AIRFIELD 11 KM DUE WEST OF NABATIYA BETWEEN INSAR AND DOUEIR STOPPED TWO AYS, POSSIBLY DUE TO LARGE NUMBER OF ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS IN THIS AREA.

7. EMBASSY WATER SITUATION AMELIORATED JULY 17 WITH SEVERAL HOURS CITY WATER FOW INTO BUILDING. NOW SOME 6500 LITERS OR 11 DAYS' SUPPLY ON HAND. CITY WATER STILL COMES IN SPORADICALLY. EMBASSY WELL INCREASINGLY BRACKISH BUT STILL PROVIDING GOOD SUPPLY NONPOTABLE WATER. SUPPLY OF COOKING GAS NOW AT 13 BOTTLES BUT ARRANGEMENT MADE WITH EAST BEIRUT SOURCE WHO APPEARS CONFIDENT ABILITY PROVWDE LIMITED SUPPLY COOKING GAS AND GASOLINE. EMBASSY SNACK BAR CONSUMES CONFIDENTIAL

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ABOUT ONE BOTTLE COOKING GAS PER DAY. EMBASSY GASOLINE STORES NOW AT 500 GALLONS, ENOUGH FOR A LARGE CONVOY TO DAMASCUS. DAILY CONSUMPTION OTHERWISE ABOUT 30 GALLONS PER DAYUK GENERATOR FUEL SUPPLY AT 17,000 LITERS, ENOUGH FOR 28 DAYS BUT RESUPPLY CHANCES SLIGHT IN VIEW DESTRUCTION OF ZAHRANI REFINERY.

8. EMBASSY HAS PLACED NEWSPAPER ADS, TO RUN THREE DAYS, ANNOUNCING REDUCTION OF STAFF TO BARE MINIMUM, AND ELIMINATION OF MOST CONSULAR SERVICES, AND AGAIN STRONGLY URGE AMCITS LEAVE LEBANON. GROUP DEPARTURE BEING ARRANGED FOR JULY 20. AD SAYS EMBASSY REDUCTIONS DUE INCREASING DIFFICULTIES OF OPERATIN IN BEIRUT. OTHER FOREIGNERS IN LEBANON WHO WISH DEPART ALSO INVITED CONTACT AMERICAN EMBASSY.

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